



Metropolitan Homelessness Commission
9:30 am, July 12, 2013
Sonny West Conference Center
Howard Office Building (Fulton Complex)
700 Second Avenue South

Commissioners present: Diane Kuhn, chair; Megan Barry, Emily Evans, Jason Holleman, Burkley Allen, Renee Pratt, Dr. Frank Boehm, Wendell Segroves, J.C. Smith, Charles Strobel, Phil Duke, Erik Cole, Marvin Cox, Angie Hubbard, Dayna Lovelady, Donzaleigh Powell

Staff present: Will Connelly, director; Doug Hausken, assistant director; La Toya Carter, outreach and housing coordinator; Judith Tackett, communications coordinator

Legal rep: Josh Lee

Metro Social Services: Pam McEwen, finance director

Welcome & Roll Call

Diane Kuhn welcomes everyone and takes roll call.

Minutes

Megan Barry made a motion to approve the minutes of May 3, 2013, J.C. Smith seconded, all approved.

Financials

Pam McEwen reported that Metro does not close its books of the 2012/13 fiscal year until the end of August. She said the Homelessness Commission did well on spending down its left-over money from last year's budget.

A second report in the package shows that through the end of FY 2012/13, the Commission collected \$55,835 for the How's Nashville campaign. The campaign already collected another \$3,000 in the first days of July. Everything that has been spent so far on the How's Nashville campaign has been spent out of the general funding stemming from left-over money from the FY2012/13 budget.

Pam McEwen said in the FY2013/14 budget, the Commission moved about \$46,000 from salaries and fringe benefits, which is the impact seen from last year's staff reorganization. That money was moved to increase the case management contract, which is now \$405,000.

Diane Kuhn said she wanted to interrupt quickly to introduce the newest commissioner, Wendell Segroves. Mr. Segroves said he lived in Nashville for most of his life, is a homeless advocate and is involved in several community groups. He said he was proud to be a part of the Commission.

Ms. Kuhn said that the Commission was fully staffed now. Will Connelly introduced Doug Hausken as the assistant director and La Toya Carter as the outreach and housing coordinator. Mr. Connelly said staff held a retreat on Tuesday to get to know each other better, and he was excited about working with the new team.

Case Management RFP/Contract update

Will Connelly reported that the case management contract was awarded to Centerstone. He said the Commission was in the process of finalizing and signing the contract. Eckman/Freeman's contract was extended for the transition phase (one or two months). "We're really appreciative of Eckman/Freeman for being willing to do that."

Director's Report:

▪ How's Nashville update – 100 Day Goal

Will Connelly said he is participating in a conference call with six peer cities every other week to discuss our progress on the 100 Day Goal. The other six cities are also engaged in a 100-Day housing goal. That conference call includes representatives from the federal government (HUD, USICH, the VA) and the 100,000 Homes Campaign.

The Commission also participates in weekly meetings with our local partners including Open Table Nashville, Park Center, the VA, MDHA, RITI, Nashville Cares, United Neighborhood Health Centers, the Rescue Mission, OSD, Downtown Partnership, Colby's Army, and more.

There are two weekly meetings around the How's Nashville campaign; in one meeting, partners discuss macro issues, in the other micro issues in regard to the How's Nashville campaign.

Mr. Connelly said the goal was to house 76 in July. He said the group still believes that we can hit that goal. "But if we don't, we're still getting a lot of people off the streets."

Will Connelly pointed to the Commission's progress report, which includes a breakdown of the 100-Day goal that was set when a group of How's Nashville partners travelled to Chicago to participate in the Rapid Results Housing Placement Boot Camp.

Discussion:

Asked about case management, Will Connelly explained that for people who were housed in June, case management has been provided by partner organizations including the Mental Health Cooperative, Park Center, Open Table Nashville,

Nashville Cares, and also Eckman/Freeman. “And we have a lot of volunteers who pitch in from the Living Room – Wendell [Segroves] has been helping – people are pitching in where needed.” Mr. Connelly said it will be nice to have Centerstone on board.

On rent payments: Mr. Connelly said that when folks don’t have an income, their rent is \$50 plus the electrical bill. “It doesn’t sound like a lot, but of course, if you don’t have a regular income, it is a lot.” He also mentioned that substance use is an issue for folks – accessing treatment and reconnecting to treatment.

On set-aside apartments from the private sector: Will Connelly explained that Kirby Davis of First Management Services took the lead on working with private landlords. “He really believes in Housing First. He agreed to donate 1% of his housing stock.” Mr. Connelly said Kirby Davis has donated 15-20 units and is working with other private landlords encouraging them to get more units donated. What that means is that when a person gets a “private unit,” he/she agrees to pay 30% of their income with a minimum payment of \$50 a month. Property managers such as Kirby Davis also loosen the criteria of background checks somewhat.

Diane Kuhn asked for the How’s Nashville team members to stand up and be recognized. Will Connelly called on Lauren Plummer, Natalie Pickett, Madge Johnson, Ingrid McIntyre, Ashley Blum, Jack Blum, Adam Ries, Brett Flener, Lindsey Krinks.

Diane Kuhn said the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission has set up a separate line item in the budget for How’s Nashville. The message is that it takes about \$1,000 to get someone situated in a new home. In June, many people gave contributions. The Commissioner packages include a letter that “we ask you to send out.” The letters include a stamped and addressed return envelope.

Further Q&A:

Megan Barry asked how many people who have been housed were still housed? Will Connelly said so far everyone was still in housing. “We’ve had some really tough situations and are still working through them. We don’t expect that everyone is going to maintain their first apartment.” However, Mr. Connelly said that didn’t mean that the How’s Nashville campaign is going to stop working with people who lose their housing. “We’re going to try again.”

Jason Holleman asked whether housing placement rates were cyclical (and asked if it was possible to compare the June housing placement rate with last year’s)?

Will Connelly said the campaign was trying to get a better handle on the housing placement numbers. “We probably can get some data through HMIS, but the data you see in the progress report includes HMIS and us asking our service providers directly. So I don’t think we have a way to really go back [and compare year-to-year at this point].”

Charles Strobel added that rather than the need for housing being seasonal, if the supply goes up, there are always people to move in.

Will Connelly said that some of the numbers that are now reported are from agencies that may not be in HMIS, “but I believe with the Section 8 vouchers, we have a better way to follow that.”

J.C. Smith asked about peer support. He said he could find 13 veterans that would offer peer support to veterans to enhance their success.

Will Connelly said it would be great if Mr. Smith could work on that part. He said one of the How’s Nashville partners is working with a woman who has experienced homelessness and is moving people into housing. And Centerstone has peer support training. But he said the campaign could definitely use more peer support.

Emily Evans asked whether the Commission was able to track the lowered burden of the justice system and the policy system as people are moving into housing.

Will Connelly said that was part of La Toya Carter’s job as housing/outreach coordinator. “In our team retreat we talked about that, how are we going to do that.”

He said the Commission will start with folks who receive Section 8 vouchers.

Emily Evans said the goal would be to quantify outcomes for tax payers.

Ingrid McIntyre asked for 1. Leads on a rehab center to partner with so that when people are ready to go into rehab, they can have a bed ready; and 2. Help with ID and birth certificate replacements to get ideas on how to speed up the process.

Howard Allen introduced a homeless man and asked for housing for him. (He was connected after the meeting with Ingrid McIntyre to do a VI survey).

Dayna Lovelady said the Salvation Army was assisting with legal aid. She said she was teaching a financial aid class and said one of her concerns was how to help people during the transition to assist them with managing money.

Erik Cole said the Financial Empowerment Centers were available, “and we can figure out to get people to locations if needed.”

J.C. Smith said OSD offers the same services for veterans. He also said to contact him if he can assist in any way, especially with furniture and transportation.

- **Communications & Marketing**

Will Connelly said the staff was trying to do a better job with communicating with commissioners. The Metropolitan Homelessness Commission website on Nashville.gov has been updates. The How’s Nashville Website is up as well (howsnashville.org). We have a Facebook page and Twitter. A newsletter will be sent out this month. Mr. Connelly said he and Doug Hausken would try to set up lunch meetings and be in contact more often.

Charles Strobel asked to include all partner organizations on the commitment cards.

Diane Kuhn asked commissioners to please communicate with Will Connelly, Judith Tackett or her with services they know of or can offer or any suggestions they have.

Moment of Silence:

A moment of silence was held for people who passed away since the last meeting. Diane Kuhn read the names of people the Commission knows about.

Announcements:

Diane Kuhn welcomed Burkley Allen who is a new Council representative on the Commission.

Weather Plan:

Commissioners asked about a weather plan. Will Connelly said that Doug Hausken and representatives from the Health Care for the Homeless Council will get together soon and try to get back on that. Doug Hausken said the warm weather plan will probably part of the disaster plan the Commission has created with OEM.

In the meantime, J.C. Smith reported that OSD was doing cooling stations. Renee Pratt said MAC gave away air conditioners, and Ingrid McIntyre reported that Open Table Nashville is holding Resource Centers on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month. At these Resource Centers, Open Table helps fill out paperwork, order birth certificates, provide food, fill out VATS and Vulnerability Indexes, and provide haircuts, foot care, showers. The Resource Shelters are held at two local congregations. Announcements and needs are listed on the Open Table Website.

Public Hearing:

(Name of the man was not caught on record)... He reported that his clothes were stolen and shared his personal story. He named a local organization where he said he was still denied services.

Steve Reiter thanked Will Connelly for what he has done under the 100,000 Homes Campaign. "I've been very, very critical of this group for a very long time," Mr. Reiter said referring to the Homelessness Commission. "I'm not going to get into who's being housed and who's not being housed. But people being housed is good." He said if the money spent was not government-related, that was fine. "We'll find out soon whether it's working."

He also talked about HMIS. He said he went to another jurisdiction and saw how they did it. "I talked to their person who is very competent. They don't release information. They don't give out information to police. The person who is responsible for HMIS here simply does not understand HIPPA law and needs to get HIPPA training." He said he got into conversation with Margaret Behm, the MDHA attorney. "Her background is not health care law." Mr. Reiter said that information was given out in violation of HIPPA laws. He also informed the Commission that he's been complaining to MDHA for a long time for not doing affordable housing.

Jim Johnston said he was a homeless advocate. He said there was no transparency at the Commission. He said the Commission needed to meet every Friday morning for at least a couple of months to figure out real solutions. He called for more accountability. He said

the Homelessness Commission was not needed because it was just spinning its wheels. “Ronald Reagan said, ‘The problem is the solution.’ What’s the problem? We’re using these people, the homeless. Let’s do it like San Francisco.” Mr. Johnston called on putting an end to homelessness. “I remember when there used to be 230 people on the streets,” he said. “And I give you credit. Lately you’ve taken some off the streets. We need to meet every week for a while and solve this problem. But quit using these people.”

Howard Allen said he met with a congressman and senator in D.C. He voiced his discouragement about Congressional focus on issues of homelessness. “I give you credit, Will, for doing what you’re doing,” Mr. Allen said. “The other thing, homelessness is bad. I’ve been homeless for 12 years. It destroys... and it kills.” He said to be able to change policies you have to have politicians. “We have four Council members here.” Mr. Allen also announced that there will be a memorial bench dedicated to Tara Cole (the Tara Cole Homeless Memorial) at Riverfront Park. “It took me six years to do this, and I want to thank the people who helped me do this.”

Barry Hobbes said that today was perhaps the first or second time in which he started to finally see the beginning of the end of this problem. He said some people know his personal situation, but this was not about him. “This is about finally turning the corner and staying on it until the home stretch.

“We can solve this problem,” Mr. Hobbes said. “I’ve seen it happen.” He encouraged the Commission and people working with the How’s Nashville campaign to continue their work. “Nobody in this country needs to be homeless, hungry, sick, [or] jobless... God helps those who help themselves.”

Madge Johnson, who works hands on with the How’s Nashville campaign, praised Will Connelly. “I’m excited about the things you’re doing. People are being housed. Yes, it is hard to decide who is being housed and who is not, but we are all coming together.” She said the meetings are focused on solutions.

Diane Kuhn said the next full Commission meeting was scheduled for September 6. The Executive Committee meeting was scheduled for next Tuesday, at 1 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned.